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is as unjust as it is paradoxical. The modernity of modern Judaism, the motive power that brings it into being, consists in that very desire to follow out scientific methods more consistently. This necessitates a much more accurate discrimination between facts and explanations, and between the fact of an explanation and the validity of that explanation, than seems to satisfy our critics. Moreover, Judaism can scarcely be said to be treated in accordance with "the improved methods of reasoning," unless due attention is also paid to the facts outside the Torah. In the above quotation, it is true, our Rabbi implies as much. "Two revelations (he says) are given us, Nature and the Torah. . . . One single opposing phenomenon . . . makes an assumption untenable." As a rule, however, our non-modern Rabbis have a knack of dismissing Nature with a compliment, and taking no further notice of her. The modernity of modern Judaism consists in taking these propositions seriously. The most scientific explanations of Nature and History are liable to disturb some of those views which go to the making of our religion. And the "modern" Judaism of every age is called into being by the need of re-adjustment.

Having given vent to our only grievance, we hasten to repeat our high estimate of Dr. Hirsch's book. The essays are all admirable. Even "Some Literary Trifles" is so good that it supplies a telling rejoinder to the author's own protest against people who "try to find out the sense of some allusion to things Jewish" in every author.

A. WOLF.

### DR. FROMER'S JUDAISM.

*Das Wesen des Judentums*, von Dr. J. FROMER (Elias Jakob). Berlin, Hüpeden & Merzyn Verlag, 1905. Pp. 183.

THIS monograph is one of a series devoted to "Kulturprobleme der Gegenwart." Its red covers seem to foreshadow the sensational treatment of the Jewish question in which our author's temporary rancour finds vent. The *Introduction* consists of a brief autobiography, in which Dr. Fromer tells the now commonplace story of early Ghetto life and subsequent self-emancipation. One is reminded of poor Solomon Maimon, who emancipated himself from the drawbacks of the Ghetto, but, unhappily, also from much besides. Born in Russian Poland our author left home in his twentieth year, spent some time in Galicia as a teacher of Hebrew, and then studied Semitics and philosophy at a German university, where he obtained

his Doctor degree. In 1900 he was appointed librarian of the Jewish library in Berlin, but forfeited his appointment in 1904, in consequence of an article which he published in the *Zukunft*, and which is the basis of the present monograph.

The mere fact that an autobiography ushers in what purports to be an objective treatment of the subject, coupled with the antecedents just mentioned, can scarcely be said to augur well for an unbiassed treatment of the Jewish question. And, on the whole, one's suspicions are realized, for, though the book is full of admissions which the really impartial reader cannot fail to construe in our favour, yet they are not unlike the blessings of a certain pagan prophet of old. With such pleasant anticipations let us turn to the diagnosis of the Jewish question, remembering, of course, that to trace the cause of Jewish disabilities to the cruelty, intolerance, or blindness of our oppressors would be nothing novel or sensational.

The result of the new and original diagnosis of the Jewish question is this: Judaism, and Judaism alone, is the cause of anti-semitism. With lightning rapidity our author follows up the entire course of Jewish history, finds out that Jewish history is all shadows with scarcely any redeeming light. Those who believe or make believe in bright patches of philo-semitism in Jewish history are either fools or knaves. Hatred has always followed the Jews everywhere, like their very shadow. It must, therefore, be due to something inherent in them. It is due to Judaism, which carries hatred with it wherever it goes, inasmuch as it teaches an ideal which is different from that of other peoples, whose ideal it actually combats. The fundamental idea or ideal of Judaism is the supremacy of "Ethics" and utter antagonism to "Aesthetics" and "Logic"; except in so far as these may serve some moral purpose. Among other peoples, on the contrary, "Aesthetics" holds the place of supreme honour. They live in the present and enjoy it. They do what they please, and follow the promptings of their senses. If the pursuit of pleasure turns out to be disastrous, well then, they pay the penalty and perish. But they do not want to live for ever, either as individuals or as nations. They prefer a pleasant, if brief, moment to a long life full of troubles. The difference, or rather conflict, of ideals causes ceaseless friction between Jews and non-Jews, and this is further aggravated by the reflection that, through our obstinate devotion to the supremacy of the ethical ideal, the Jewish people form the only exception to the law of eternal flux in the rise and decline of nations. To most people all this, even allowing for exaggerations, may seem a eulogy of the Jews; but our author is a disciple of Schopenhauer, and intends the very opposite of flattery.

The supremacy of the ethical ideal in Judaism is obvious, though our neighbours will surely resent the offensive compliment which our author pays them in suggesting that they do not acknowledge the supremacy of the moral ideal. But is it true that Judaism combats what our author calls Aesthetics and Logic, that is, the True and the Beautiful, as such? Judaism combats the immoral, be it never so disguised; but that is a very different thing. As for the Beautiful, are not the *Song of Songs* and the nature-poems of the Bible monuments of aesthetic appreciation? Dr. Fromer disposes of the *Song of Songs* by a reference to its allegorical interpretation. Since when, however, does the Beautiful cease to be beautiful through association with the True and the Good? Observe the striking combination in the Scriptural phrase "beauty of holiness." The chief evidence which our author brings forward in support of his theory consists of passages in which Scripture denounces idolatry (such as the descriptive satire in Isaiah xlv). Bias has so blinded our impartial author that he fails to see the very obvious character of all such passages, namely, that they strive *for the True, not against the Beautiful*. And when he proceeds to show how Judaism has always been opposed to what he calls Logic, one begins to suspect him of having rashly judged his co-religionists by his own logic or the want of it. The only relevant evidence adduced is that the Bible countenances miracles. As though miracles were not characteristic of the early history of science as much as of the early history of religion! And he goes from bad to worse when he makes Judaism indifferent even as regards religious truths, and mainly concerned with ceremonial. He bases his view on a passage which occurs in the introduction to the Midrash on Lamentations, but the meaning of which he has obviously failed to grasp. The Midrash says: *כתבי ואותי עזבו ואת תורת לא שמרו. הלואי אותי עזבו. ותורתי שמרו. מתוך שהיו מתעסקין בה המאור שבה היה מחזירן למוטב. רב הונא אמר למוד תורה אע"פ שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה.* This is how Dr. Fromer renders the opening sentences of the Midrashic passage. "'Und mich haben sie verlassen und meine Gebote nicht beobachtet.' Ich wünschte, sie hätten mich aus dem Spiele gelassen und nur meine Gebote beobachtet." Could anything be more perverted than this "translation"? Yet our author has no doubt that it means, as he goes on explaining it to mean, that Jews are not to concern themselves about religious truths, not to trouble about God even, but simply observe the prescribed ceremonies, &c. Of course, all that the Midrash really urges is, that even in times of doubt we should still continue to occupy ourselves with the Torah,

that is, to study it, and our continued occupation with the Torah will eventually reclaim us for God and goodness. Our author also cites Moses Mendelssohn's remark that Judaism has no dogmas; but he does not understand the exact sense in which Mendelssohn used the word "dogma." The author of *Morgenstunden* and *Phädon* was the very last person to be accused of thinking that Judaism is indifferent about, say, the existence of God, and immortality.

It is not worth while following our author much further. His use of choice passages from Rabbinic literature is occasionally such as has already long ago made us regret that the Rabbis had not been warned to talk seriously at the approach of a fool; and, in his eagerness to show up the ignorance and hypocrisy of German Rabbis, he even stoops to make capital out of a friendly jest. However, having shown, to his own satisfaction, that the cause of Jewish suffering is to be found in Judaism, and nothing else, the remedy he suggests is, of course, for Jews to forsake Judaism and be merged in their Gentile environment. Several times, indeed, he has occasion to point out that there are many born Jews that have abandoned Judaism, and suffer from intolerance none the less; but he does not seem to observe how this admission affects his theory that Judaism is the exclusive cause of anti-semitism. And the crowning point of his logic is reached when, in the name of Justice, he appeals to the Gentile world to promote the absorption of Jewry, and so terminate Jewish suffering. Why in the name of *Justice*, if Jews alone are to blame for their sufferings? And why in the name of a *moral ideal*, if our devotion to "Ethics" is at the bottom of all the mischief?

A. WOLF.

### STEINSCHNEIDER'S BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JEWISH HISTORY.

*Die Geschichtsliteratur der Juden in Druckwerken und Handschriften, zusammengestellt von MORITZ STEINSCHNEIDER. I. Abteilung: Bibliographie der hebräischen Schriften.* (Frankf. a. M., Kauffmann, 1905. xii + 190 pp. 8vo. 6 mark.)

In the year 1850 appeared in Ersch and Gruber's *Realencyclopädie* (vol. XXVII, pp. 357-471) Steinschneider's article "Jüdische Literatur," which is of fundamental value to the present day, and is still the only scientific and critical exposition of this wide domain. Since that time the author, as we learn from the preface of the work under notice, has devoted special attention to the historical side of